



Facts about the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE)

State law authorized the development of the California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE), which students in California public schools must pass to earn a high school diploma beginning in the 2005–06 school year.

Purpose of the CAHSEE

The purpose of the CAHSEE is (1) to improve student achievement in high school; and (2) to help ensure that students who graduate from high school can demonstrate competency in reading, writing, and mathematics

Notification of the CAHSEE Requirement

All students and their parents or guardians must be provided with notice of the CAHSEE requirement beginning in grade nine and each year thereafter (*Education Code* Section 60850[f][2]). At a minimum, the notification must include the following: the date of the exam; the requirements for passing the exam; the consequences of not passing the exam; and a statement that passing the examination is a condition of graduation (*Education Code* Section 48980[e]). Students who transfer from another school district must be notified at the time of enrollment.

Test Content

The CAHSEE is divided into two parts: English-language arts and mathematics. Test questions address California content standards that a High School Exit Examination Standards Panel, appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, determined students should know and be able to do to graduate from high school.

English-Language Arts

One part of the CAHSEE addresses state English-language arts standards in reading and writing.

This part of the exam consists of multiple-choice questions and a writing task. The reading section covers vocabulary, decoding, informational reading, and literary reading. Fifty percent of the passages are literary texts, and fifty percent are informational texts.

The writing section addresses writing strategies, applications, and conventions. In addition to the multiple-choice questions, students are asked to complete one writing task on a specific topic or in response to a literary or informational passage.

Mathematics

The second part of the CAHSEE addresses state mathematics content standards. The math part of the exam consists of all multiple-choice questions. It includes statistics, data analysis and probability, number sense, measurement and geometry, algebra and functions, mathematical reasoning, and Algebra I. Students must demonstrate computational skills and a foundation in arithmetic, including working with decimals, fractions, and percentages.

CAHSEE Blueprints

The CAHSEE blueprints, which list the state content standards that are assessed on each part of the exam, are posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/admin.asp>.

Test Variations

A test variation is a change in the manner in which a test is presented or administered, or in how an examinee is allowed to respond. Test variations include, but are not limited to, accommodations and modifications. An accommodation is a change in the testing environment or process that does not alter what is the CAHSEE measures or affect the comparability of scores, whereas a modification is a change that fundamentally alters what the test measures or affects the comparability of scores.



Students with disabilities must meet the CAHSEE requirement to receive a California high school diploma beginning with the 2005–06 school year. Students must be allowed to take the CAHSEE with any accommodations and modifications that are specified in their individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan for use on the CAHSEE standardized testing, or for use during classroom instruction and assessment. Students who use an accommodation and earn a score of 350 or higher have passed that part of the CAHSEE. Students who use a modification on one or both parts of the CAHSEE, have earned the equivalent of a passing score, and have met all other state and local school district graduation requirements may be eligible for a diploma if a waiver of the requirement to pass is granted by the local governing board. Parents or guardians must ask the school principal to submit a waiver on behalf of their student. More information on accommodations and modifications can be found on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/accmod.asp>.

Test variations must also be provided to English learners who regularly use them in the classroom. Examples include being tested in a separate room with other English learners, additional supervised breaks, extra time within the testing day, English-to-primary language or primary language-to-English translation glossaries, or allowing students to hear a translated version of the test directions and to ask clarifying questions in their primary language.

Testing Opportunities

All students are required to take the CAHSEE for the first time in grade ten. Students who do not pass one or both parts of the CAHSEE in grade ten are given up to five additional opportunities to retake the part(s) of the test not yet passed. Students may only retake the part(s) of the exam not passed. The CAHSEE testing schedule through the 2007–08 school year is posted on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs/admin.asp>. School districts select their schools' testing dates from this schedule.

Reporting and Using Results

Within ten weeks of the administration, school districts are sent two copies of the Student and Parent Report for each student who took the exam. One copy is to be provided to parents or guardians of the student and the other may be placed in the student's permanent record. Summary results for each school, school district, county, and the state are posted annually on the Internet.

The passing score for the mathematics part of the exam is approximately 55 percent of the test questions correct, or a scale score of 350. The passing score for the English-language arts part of the exam is approximately 60 percent, or a scale score of 350.

Supplemental Instruction

School districts must provide supplemental instruction aligned with the state content standards to assist students in grades seven through twelve who do not demonstrate sufficient progress toward passing the CAHSEE (*Education Code* Sections 37252 and 60851[f]).

State and Federal Accountability Requirements

The CAHSEE results are used as one indicator in calculating the Academic Performance Index (API) for each high school and school district for the state accountability program. The CAHSEE results are also used to calculate Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), part of the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001.

More Information

Additional information about the CAHSEE is available on the CDE Web site at <http://www.cde.ca.gov/ta/tg/hs> or by contacting a high school principal or counselor.